Vol. III. Numb. 13.

The EXAMINER.

From Friday *January* 2, to Monday *January* 5, 1712.

Non Induſtria Inquietos & Inſanos, ſed falſæ rerum imagines agitant. Nam ne illi quidem ſine aliquâ ſpe moventur; pruritat illos alicujus rei ſpecies, cujus vanitatem Capta Mens non coarguit. Seneca *de Tranquil.*

WHenever I have been ask'd how it came about that the *Whigs* ſhould, on all occaſions, diſcover their exceſſive want of Faith in matters of Religion, and whence I could account for the many Declarations they have publiſh'd in favour of Infidelity, I muſt own I was always ſo charitable not to impute this Defect to a total Apoſtacy, but allow'd them a ſufficient Stock of this Vertue, which perhaps grew up to a Degree of Bigottry; only their Religion being altogether of this World, their Faith was entirely Political, and made to Tally with their Profeſſion. I have met with one of theſe ſtrong Believers, who for a whole Afternoon has Declaim'd very heartily againſt *Prieſtcraft*, and the Impoſitions of the Church. Neither *Fathers*, nor *Councils*, nor any Eccleſiaſtical Authority could ſtand before him. But when he fell into the old Topick of *Popery*, I heard him with delight; and eaſily gave into the Company, as I found his Zeal and his Underſtanding drew nearer together. And yet this very Profeſſor, who had ſo handſomely confuted the *Inquiſition*, and damn'd all *Confeſſions* and *Creeds* which came from the Rack, and were drawn up under the Influence of a temporal *Anathema*, has appear'd the very next Morning with the following Articles in his Mouth, which he not only maintain'd with all the Heat and Foam of an Enthuſiaſt, but would have obtruded them upon his Brethren and Fellow *Chriſtians*, under very ſevere Penalties; and ſhew'd himſelf ready, in Defence of thoſe Principles, to ſubmit to the worſt of Tortures and Perſecutions, now in uſe among *Proteſtants*, which by a Metaphor of the Growth of *Smithfield* is commonly call'd *Roaſting*.

ARTICLES of a *Whig-Creed*.

I. Dunkirk *is a Place of no great Conſequence, lying within reach of the Cannon of* Graveling.

II. Great Britain *has, upon the Ballance, got ſeveral Millions by the War.*

III. *The* Amſterdam Gazette *contains nothing but what a* Chriſtian *may with ſafety rely on.*

IV. *The* Dutch *never deſign to take any Advantages in the way of Trade, to the Prejudice of their* good Allies.

V. *Laſt Week Five hundred* Popiſh Prieſts *were ſeen to paſs through* Feverſham.

VI. *Imported at the Cuſtom-houſe*, Ditto, *Ten thouſand Pair of Wooden Shooes.*

If I had leiſure to ſet theſe Articles in a Parallel with thoſe which the *Church* of *Rome* has at any time ramm'd down the Throats of their Laity, I could perhaps make it appear, that *Whig-craft* has by far the Advantage of *Prieſt-craft*; that the Lay-Tyrant is much more Abſolute than the Eccleſiaſtical, and that if ſuch Extravagancies of Bigottry ſhould obtain and over-run a Country, *It would*, as Sir *Roger L'Eſtrange* has obſerv'd in a Criſis of the like Nature, *be ſome degree of Modeſty to have no Religion at all.*

It is hard to expreſs, and difficult to conceive, with what Rage and Violence theſe Articles are back'd and ſupported; I ſhould ſhock the Reader's Humanity, and perhaps bring Tears into his Eyes, by deſcribing in proper Colours the diſmal Effects of *Political Faith* and *State-Superſtition* in the World. What vaſt Sums have been drein'd in Wagers? What Tumults and Diſtractions have reign'd in *Coffee-Houſes?* and how many *Proteſtant* Noſes are at this very time doing Penance for Disbelief, under a malancholy Shrowd of brown Paper? In my Opinion, if we would liſten to the Sages of the other Sex, when they dictate to us from the Chimney Corner or the Elbow Chair, theſe Differences might with great eaſe be compoſed. The Scheme they propoſe, and the Articles which they have been ſo long drawing up, are better ſuited to our Capacities, and appear more worthy the aſſent of Rational Creatures. Suppoſe we made trial of three or four of them, till we found our ſelves in a Condition to reliſh the reſt, and admitted for Orthodox,

I. *That it was unlawful to pare one's Nails upon a* Friday.
II. *That* ſhedding *of* Salt *was a groſs Immorality.* And,
III. *That the* Death-watch *is as neceſſary to be believed as Predeſtination.*

I am throughly perſuaded theſe Poſitions would, upon their reception, render Mankind, and eſpecially the *Whigs*, of a much more peaceable Diſpoſition than that whichnow prevails amongſt them. Nor can I think they would be more at a loſs to defend theſe Articles, than they are to juſtify their *Political Faith* in its preſent Circumſtances. For theſe Notions are durable, and carry the Marks of Veneration and Antiquity: Neither do I call to mind any one eminent Doctor, or Body of learned Men, who ever yet undertook to confute this Hypotheſis. But now *Whig-Faith* alters every Tide: This Week is a contradiction to the Doctrines of the laſt: And they have a new *Creed* with every Mail, or every *Seſſion* of the *Junta*. He who believ'd *Dunkirk* to be an inconſiderable Place this laſt Week, muſt, upon the arrival of the Poſt, as poſitively declare, *That* 3000 Britains *have lately dy'd there of the Plague*; and the Moment the *Dutch* come into the *Peace*, I expect to be told to my Face, *That the* Author *of the* Amſterdam Gazette *is the moſt romantick Writer in* Europe. A Gentleman of my acquaintance, who has a great deal of Time upon his Hands, kept a Diary of *Whig-Creeds* for this laſt Year, with proper Obſervations upon every Article as to its Progreſs and Reception within the Bills of Mortality: He deſign'd to have taken up about half the Preſſes in Town, in order to ſupply all his Countrymen with *Creeds* for every Day in the Week; but there happened at that time to be a great demand for *Catechiſms*, which had a conſiderable Run during the Winter, and upon the late growth of *Unbelief*, he is forced to lay aſide his Project, becauſe he deſpairs of having his Papers freed from the Tax, on account of their being Tracts and Diſcourſes of Piety.

One would be tempted to imagine, that the *Synods* and *Councils* of the *Whigs*, and their ſubordinate Societies for propagating *Political Faith*, were compos'd of Men of very formidable Capacities and great penetration in *State-Bigottry*, ſuch as the World might deem a fit Match for the *Jeſuits*: But the Ignorance and Superſtition of any Sect, is by no means a Proof of the Underſtanding of their Leaders. I have often pity'd a poor Divine, who has been labouring and drudging for a whole Hour, to procure admittance for one ordinary Article among a Congregation of theſe Profeſſors; and

perhaps

perhaps has fail'd at last in the Attempt, though he was supported in it by all the Forces that Reason, Eloquence, and Authority could bring to his Assistance; when to my certain knowledge, no small part of his Auditors, upon adjourning to the Coffee-house, have at the first opening of one of these Political *Creed-makers*, swallow'd the most Presumptuous Falshoods and Absurdities without hesitation, and gave up their Reason and Senses to implicit Faith, with as much Pleasure and Satisfaction, as if they expected to be rewarded with an immediate Possession of *Fools Paradise*. That which appeared most wonderful was, that they not only assented at first Hearing, but began immediately to Dispute, Cavil, and draw Consequences from what was told them, as if they had been acquainted with the Doctrine long before. No Proofs, no Evidence, no Arguments were demanded, in order to their Conviction; but only perhaps some Tradition from *'Change Ally*, a Quotation out of a Letter from the *Hague*, or the Whisper of some great Man at a *Levee*, as remarkable for Invention as he who repeated it was for Propagation. So easie a Matter is it to be pleas'd with being cheated, and to suffer the grossest Tricks to pass upon us, when we like the Person of the Conjurer! At the very time when Philosophy was at the height in *Greece*, when *Socrates*, *Plato*, and other living Oracles adorn'd that Country, the silly superstitious People would resort to Statues of *Wood* and *Brass*, to senseless Stocks and ambiguous Gods, some of which they were persuaded had their residence *below*; and preferr'd a Nod, a Shrug, a Whisper, or a *double Entendre* from them, before the Judgment of those very Men, whom their Devils, whenever they were pleas'd to be in their Senses, pronounced and confessed to be *the wisest upon Earth*.

Political Faith is, in the humble Opinion of an honest Heretick, who claims the benefit of *The Act of Toleration* to dissent from them, the most unprofitable Vertue which at this time of Day the *Whigs* could single out from the whole Catalogue, for their own special Use and Service. *Faith*, of whatever Sort it be, whether Temporal or Spiritual, has a necessary dependance upon a lively *Hope*; but a Church reviving, a Monarchy re-establish'd, and a Peace approaching, are enough to bury all the most chimerical Pretences of a *Whig* to hope; and therefore he may throw away his *Faith* after his *Charity*. For I observe all the Vertues of that Party are *dated*; and accordingly *Moderation*, which once stood for almost every thing but what it really signify'd, is now perfectly out of Fashion, and expir'd about the middle of *March*, *Anno Domini* 1710. And for this reason I would humbly recommend it to their Leaders, to let us know in some publick *Advertisement*, when they would have their People begin to be Humble, Charitable or Good-humour'd; and upon what Day of the *Month* they are to leave off *Believing*, and return to their primitive State of Infidelity: Such a Contrivance would be a great ease to *Tender Consciences*, and to all those who have the Misfortune to be employ'd in taking care of those fickle, splenatick Creatures.

Whatever some restive *Tories* may think of the *growth* of *Popery*, which is now every where laugh'd at, because it makes so considerable an Article in the *Political Creeds* of the *Whigs*, I must own my Fears chime in with theirs, whenever I begin to ruminate on this melancholly Subject. For I verily believe their Suspicions took rise from the Knowledge of Themselves, and the Weakness of some of their Brethren. Certainly a *Jesuit* in Masquerade, or a good subtle *Missionary*, especially if he takes up the old Disguise of a *Cloak* and a *blue Apron*, will find it no hard Task to persuade a poor credulous *Whig*, *That the* Baptist *had five or six Heads*, *That St.* Dunstan *took the* Devil *by the Nose*, or convince him of the Truth of all the mighty Atchievements of St. *Patrick* and St. *Winifred*, since it can be prov'd upon him, that he has subsisted his Faith, for some Months past, upon Lies and Forgeries of much the same Magnitude; and if Legends are the Food of the Faithful, he who brings them a fresh Collation ready Cook'd and Dish'd out to their Palate, will not fail to deserve their Thanks and Approbation. Nothing can be wanting to create and establish a good Understanding between the *Whigs* and *Papists*, but some lucky Project to reconcile their Interests, and make the Hopes and Views of both Parties the same: So soon as the Court of *Rome* has concerted proper Measures for this great Work, I expect to see the same Game play'd over again, which miscarry'd so very unaccountably in the Reign of King *James* II. and to find *Peter* and *Jack*, the two Confederate Generals of the *Church Militant*, march Hand in Hand under the same Banner.

If the Invention of the Leaders of the Whigs in establishing and giving out *Political Creeds*, were equal to the Zeal of their Partisans in Maintaining, Defending, and Propogating the Faith; their *Classes* and *Synods*, would become truly formidable, and not only the *Church*, but *Christianity* it self, might be justly voted *in Danger*. Some of these *Creeds* come originally by Tradition, others are Translated out of a Foreign Language, and no small Quantity of them are transmitted to faithful Correspondents in a Packet from beyond Sea, by which Conveyance, as Father *Paul* of *Venice* complains, several Articles of the *Romish* Church found their way to *Trent*: But so soon as the Hint is given, it is strange to see with how much Industry all the Believers bestir themselves: The Contagion spreads in a Moment: If a Man were to set out from the *Smyrna* in Company with any one single *Article*, the best *Hackney-Coach* in Town could not carry him to *Garraway's* time enough to have the Glory of *Telling first*. You may indeed now and then meet with a new Convert, or some *Sceptick* by Nature, who will be distrustful in spite of Principles; but if he offers to express his assent with any the least sign of Indifference or Suspicion of being in the Wrong, if he only says, *It is confidently reported*; or, *They tell you*; or, *It's Given out*; or, *He has it from very good Hands*; all his Friends presently lay him on thick, and the least he can expect is to endure the Mortification of refusing five or six *Wagers*, or undergo the Suspicion of Apostacy. All that the other Party has to do in these Cases, is to proceed by the old approved Method, and beat down one Creed by setting up another. Then it is that the *Whigs* distinguish themselves; their Valour, Constancy and Cunning are almost irresistable. They have this sure Maxim on their side, by which the *Romish* Clergy have kept their Ground so long, *They take every thing, and part with nothing*. But of all the Masters of *Political Faith*, recommend me to those who prevent the Imposition of a *Creed*, and believe it almost before it is made; who upon the first Tidings of an *Article*, perhaps before it is fully reported to them in its due Limitations and Restrictions, cry out, *I thought so*; *I always believ'd as much*; *I knew it would come to this.* Such Bigots are the Pillars of the *Whig-Church*, and for a long time retain all the Monumental Inscriptions which are fix'd upon them. For, as one of their Favourite *Divines* has observ'd in the Case of *Repentance*, so it is with *Faith*: *Men of great Parts and a shining* Genius, *can believe more in a few Moments, than* Christians *of an Inferior Order can do all their Life-time.*

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